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Former psychologist sues BBB, ex-agent

The Plain Dealer - Cleveland, Ohio

Author: SANDRA LIVINGSTON

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A former Beachwood psychologist yesterday filed an \$18.1 million suit against the Better Business Bureau and a former agent who recently admitted he had lied to the FBI.

In a suit filed in Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court, Edward L. Ohlson of Chagrin Falls contends he was arrested, jailed and detained as a result of false information supplied to the Cleveland Police Department and the FBI by James Sutter of Lakewood.

Sutter, a former BBB trade specialist, pleaded guilty last week to lying to the FBI about being followed by a car licensed to Ohlson's wife, Rose Ellen. Sutter was forced to resign last month because of the charges.

Sutter and BBB officials could not be reached for comment late yesterday. A spokesman for the FBI declined to comment on the Ohlson suit.

"The Better Business Bureau lost control of this investigation," said Lynn B. Simon, a lawyer for Ohlson. "It's not as if (Sutter) made a little mistake . . . This was a malicious act on his part. Why it happened to Dr. Ohlson, I don't know."

The suit also alleges that the BBB did not conduct a proper background examination on Sutter and that it should have known Sutter had been convicted of a felony.

Simon said Ohlson had to give up his psychology practice because of Sutter's allegations and is now working in real estate.

Earlier this year, it was revealed that, based on information supplied by the BBB, the FBI was investigating Ohlson in connection with a loan scam involving millions of dollars.

Simon said yesterday that Ohlson was never charged and denies being involved in any scam. She said Ohlson was involved in a legitimate loan and was paying back the funds.

In May, after the investigation was made public, Sutter said he had received a death threat about the Ohlson case. Sutter also claimed he was followed by someone in a white Corvette on three occasions and gave the FBI the license number of a car that belonged to Rose Ellen Ohlson.

The FBI found that Mrs. Ohlson's car was inoperable and, according to Simon, had not been used in two years. In July, a grand jury found no substance to the BBB's claims that Ohlson had menaced Sutter

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Abstract (Document Summary)

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